

Sketch

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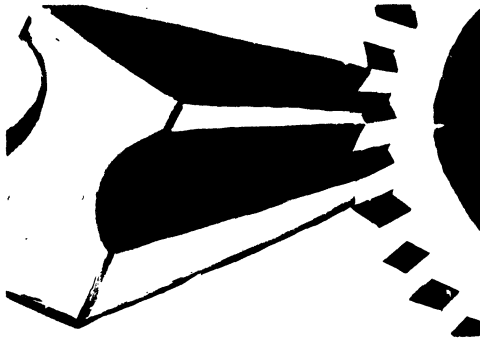
Article 4

No Reason Given

Homer K. Gordon*

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No Reason Given

Homer K. Gordon

M. E. So.

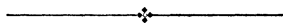
THREE steps on the cold cement floor and two steps on the wooden grate. The wooden grate is to keep the black oil that drips from your hands and from your apron—from rotting the soles of your shoes and swelling your rubber heels to nearly twice their ordinary size. For a man whose shoes are rotten could never walk five steps one way and five in return four times a minute—five miles a day carrying eighty pounds of steel shaft—and all in a lane as wide as the length of your arm and as long as five steps to the drill and five more back to the grey, oily monster that steals your soul and your brain and turns you into a machine of flesh and bones—but that's as it should be.

It is best that you don't think and see and hear and smell; for you might smell the powdered resin that keeps the clutch from slipping, or the stench of drilling compound that has been kept in the tank too long. You might hear the monotonous whistle of the leaky air-hose; or listen for the tap-tap of the loose board in the wooden grate as you place your feet in identically the same spots four times a minute; or hear the throbbing beat of the straining machine—and your heart. You might see the pile of steel shafts that never seems to grow smaller, and try to count to the bottom; or see the boils on your oil-soaked arms. But most of all you might think. You might think of spending your life in an alley three feet by fifteen. You might think of walking five miles a day between a drill and a milling machine; of men who

die eight hours a day; of bent backs and broken spirits; of fervent hopes for children's freedom.

AND then you might think of laughing eyes and a smile that makes your blood race; of thick, clean-smelling chestnut hair, soft skin, and lips that heal the wounds in your heart; of vine-covered cottages and children's toys . . . then of courage—of courage to hope and dream; of courage so far beyond your own that it makes you feel ashamed—

Five steps—three on the cold cement floor and two on the wooden grate. Five steps between the door and the timekeeper's desk. Black is the oil on the floor. Blacker is the ink which the timekeeper uses to write four words after your name: "Quit—no reason given."



Open Letter To Russia

Louis G. van der Linden

Sci. Jr.

In lightless day and bitter cold two armies crouch.
One large—one small.

The reasons for aggression aren't in evidence.
It seems you people wish for happiness,
Yet, die for a cause unknown when your tyrant roars.

Is this the rule of the people?
The gift of Marx to all Mankind?
Does it make you people happier
This trail of death behind?

Why do you cringe—why don't you fight?
Not your brothers on the west—but your tyrant's might!